

Jack Cloherty

New CIA pressure

WASHINGTON

The Central Intelligence Agency tried everything from court action to cajoling to keep the story out of the papers.

But last week, Outside Magazine revealed the details of CIA attempts to place two nuclear-powered devices in the Himalayan mountains to spy on Chinese atomic tests and missile firings.

As in the case of the CIA Howard Hughes mystery ship, the Glomar Explorer, the agency's attempts to squelch the story are almost as interesting as the story itself.

The Glomar Explorer, of course, attempted to salvage a Soviet submarine, and the CIA wanted to keep the attempts secret.



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The nuclear-powered devices in the Himalayas were designed to provide information on the Chinese not available through any other intelligence means. One of the devices was lost, and the fear now is that its nuclear material may make its way into the headwaters of India's Ganges River and become a serious health hazard.

The story first threatened to surface in early 1974, when Victor Marchetti and John Marks were preparing to publish their book, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence."

The CIA went to court to stop publication of the Marchetti-Marks book, and successfully had many key portions of it censored before its release. One of the portions deleted contained the Himalayan story. The agency was able to win the deletion because Marchetti, a former CIA official, had taken the standard agency oath years earlier, promising not to divulge non-authorized information.

When this reporter learned of the story — in May of 1974 — while working with columnist Jack Anderson — CIA director William Colby swung into action.

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